

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 286

By Ford

A RESOLUTION to designate the outdoor production of Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area, currently known as "Liberty!", as the Official Outdoor Drama of the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected officials of the State of Tennessee should pause and pay tribute to those noteworthy organizations and events that have significantly contributed to preserving the history and heritage of our great state; and

WHEREAS, "Liberty!" is unquestionably this State's finest outdoor drama, having been performed annually during the month of July for thirty-one consecutive years, and this exceptional production is beginning its fourth decade; and

WHEREAS, this esteemed production is the longest running drama of any kind in the State of Tennessee, and tells the story of the State's frontier beginnings, the friendly coexistence of two noble civilizations – the American settler and the native Cherokee Nation – and that of the great American westward expansion; and

WHEREAS, American liberty was first organized upon the very ground where the outdoor drama is presented when, in May 1772, the settlers created the Articles of the Watauga Association, thus establishing the first system of American democratic government independent of British rule, ultimately hailed by historians as the first free and independent government on the continent; and

WHEREAS, in March 1775, the Watauga Association hosted a council between Judge Richard Henderson and the chiefs of the Cherokee Nation, resulting in the Transylvania Purchase, which included over twenty million acres of land, comprising much of the present states of Kentucky and Tennessee, the largest private real estate transaction ever recorded; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 1780, more than 1,100 fighting men gathered at Sycamore Shoals and, the next day, marched over the mountains in search of Colonel Patrick Ferguson, commander of the British western flank; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 1780, in the famous battle of King's Mountain (South Carolina), the Overmountain Men, led by Colonels John Sevier, Isaac Shelby, William Campbell, and Charles McDowell, attacked the British Army and won a victory that is often considered the turning point of the American Revolution in the South, and was a crucial link in the chain of events that led to the surrender of the British forces during the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of gifted local volunteers come together at the location where these historic events actually occurred and celebrate the lives of the people and depict important episodes that helped shape the heritage of this great State and country; and

WHEREAS, the historical drama depicts life on the frontier, from celebrations through difficult times, including attacks by militant Cherokee warriors and British dragoons; and

WHEREAS, had it not been for the brave settlers who were seeking a better life for themselves and their families, and who were willing to fight for their future as well as ours, the great State of Tennessee, as we know it today, would not exist; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for this General Assembly to recognize the role "Liberty!" and its performers have played in preserving and venerating the panoramic history of this great State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the production at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area, currently known as "Liberty!", is hereby designated as the Official Outdoor Drama of the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.